

KEEPING UP WITH Friends

of the Alexandria Mental Health Center

FRIENDSOFAMHC@GMAIL.COM



ABOUT FRIENDS

OUR MISSION

Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center (AMHC) provides financial help and hope to Alexandrians receiving City services for mental health conditions, substance use disorders, and developmental disabilities.

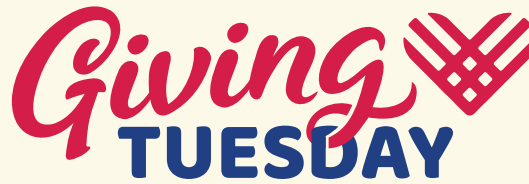
OUR APPROACH

Friends is a non-profit organization founded in 1984 with the knowledge that community makes a significant difference for those living with a mental health condition, developmental disability, or substance use on their path to recovery.

Friends' primary goal is to provide a financial safety net for Alexandrians receiving mental health services from the City's Community Services Board (CSB). Friends uses donations to provide help and hope to these individuals and their families for special and emergency needs, such as housing, medicine, dental care, transportation, social and educational activities, and basic life necessities.

Additionally, Friends supports the City and other partners working to advance mental health throughout Alexandria— those who strengthen the safety net; improve mental health awareness and advocacy; reduce stigma; and enhance training for CSB staff.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR! November 29 is...



Giving Tuesday is a global movement unleashing the power of radical generosity. Created in 2012, it's a simple idea: a day that encourages people to do good. Since then, it has grown to inspire hundreds of millions of people across the world to give. **Join the movement and give on November 29, or any day, whether**

it's your time, a donation, or the power of your voice. It could be making someone smile, helping a neighbor, showing up for an issue, or giving some of what we have to those who need our help. Every act counts and everyone can contribute toward building the world we all want to live in. Donors may give online for Giving Tuesday and at mightycause.com/organization/Friends-Of-The-Alexandria-Mental-Health-Center or givegab.com/nonprofits/friends-of-the-alexandria-mental-health-center/campaigns/FriendsoftheAMHC. Find other ways to give at the end of this newsletter.

THE CALL TO GIVE: Support Our Mission

We invite Friends supporters to help us in our mission by creating more security and stability through longer term help for clients that need breathing room to address immediate needs. To that end, **we are looking to raise an additional \$20,000.00 by the end of 2022.** We intend to use this money to work with our colleagues at DCHS to move clients out of emergency situations and focus on their long-term stability.

This fall, we spoke with supervisors and case workers in Alexandria's Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS). **We asked them what the number one need was for their clients living with mental health, substance use disorders and developmental disabilities. With one voice they stated: stable housing.** We know that stability in housing leads to better outcomes for a client. Stable housing means clients can find the treatment services they need. For those clients involved with the legal system, stable housing supports successful outcomes in probationary programs such as substance use treatment, the mental health treatment docket or drug courts. Most

importantly, if clients feel they are safe at home, they can focus on their recovery and become productive community members.



In the last 40 years, Friends has been a gap filler paying bills such as a security deposit, medical bills, educational and vocational training, utility bills, rent and more. We will still be filling these important needs, but what if it was not always an emergency? What if when we paid a security deposit and first month's rent, we also paid for the second and third to let the client catch their breath? What if we could truly support Alexandrians to thrive in our community and removed their worry that a hospitalization or needed treatment would cause them to lose everything?

Please spread the word and join us in lifting up Alexandrians who need support in managing mental illnesses, substance abuse disorders and intellectual disabilities in our community!

ABOUT THE CSB



The CSB oversees the City's publicly funded services for Alexandrians with mental health conditions.

In 2018, the CSB served 4,363 Alexandrians of all ages through mental health, developmental disability and substance abuse services. Historically, of those for whom income is known, nearly half have had annual family incomes of \$15,000 or less. In 2018, 25% were under age 20. The CSB is part of the Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS).

FRIENDS BOARD MEMBERS

Anna Dvorchik,
Co-Chair

Mary C. Ray, LCSW,
Co-Chair

Monica Rusk, Treasurer

Jeremy Thompson,
Secretary

Kedryn Berrian

Adam Bloom-Paicopolos

Rebecca Bradford

Libby-Eife Johnson

Afework Eshetu

Elizabeth Livingston

Val Reilly

Hon. Allison Silberberg



Do You Know Where to Call in a Medical Crisis?

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline rolled out nationally in July, operated through the former National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, a network of 200 locally operated crisis call centers. While transition to 988 is an important step to strengthen crisis care, the transformation will take time. The geolocation service has not been implemented yet by the Federal Communications Commission, which means that cell phone callers in Northern Virginia may be routed—based on their cell phone area code—to a response center outside of their residential area.

Due to these pending geolocation services, the City of Alexandria and localities across Virginia continue to promote direct lines to local crisis support: **PRS CrisisLink at 703.527.4077, TTY 711 or text the word CONNECT to 85511.** In addition, City services include **Emergency Services (alexandriava.gov/go/1865)**, available 24/7 by calling 703.746.3401 and asking for an Emergency Services clinician. Learn more at **alexandriava.gov/go/3850.**

Need Help in a Crisis? Call 24 Hours a Day



- Adult Protective Services** • 703.746.5778 • alexandriava.gov/go/1953
- Adult Protective Services State Hotline** • 1.888.832.3858 • dss.virginia.gov/family/as/aps.cgi
- Child Protective Services** • 703.746.5800 • alexandriava.gov/go/1929
- State of Virginia Child Protective Services** • 1.800.552.7096 • dss.virginia.gov/family/cps/index.cgi
- Domestic Violence** • 703.746.4911 • alexandriava.gov/go/2398
- Emergency Mental Health Services** • 703.746.3401 • alexandriava.gov/go/1865
- Sexual Assault** • 703.683.7273 • alexandriava.gov/go/2400
- Substance Use Disorder Residential Treatment** • 703.746.3636 • alexandriava.gov/go/1874

Suicide Prevention Resources

- CrisisLink** 703.527.4077 or text **"CONNECT"** to **85511**
- Crisis Text Line** Text **"HOME"** to **741741**
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Veterans Crisis Line** Call **1.800.273.8255**, Press **1**, or text **838255**, or chat confidentiality with someone online 24/7 through **Crisis Chat***
- Emergency Services, Alexandria Dept. of Community and Human Services** 703.746.3401
- Red Nacional del Suicidio** 1.888.628.9454
- The Trevor Project, LGBTQ Youth** 1.866.488.7386 or **TrevorText**, a confidential and secure resource that provides live help for LGBTQ youth with a trained specialist, over text messages: Text **START** to **678678**. Chat with someone online 24/7 through **Trevor Chat****

***Crisis Chat:** veteranscrisisline.net/get-help-now/chat/

****Trevor Chat:** thetrevorproject.org/get-help/



Seeking Board Members

Friends of the AMHC consists of a Board of volunteers who make Alexandrians in the form of direct financial assistance, education retirement of one board member and a couple of unfilled slots. The need of volunteer board members who have experience with Mary Ray, current co-chairs of Friends invite you to

Friends Highlights for 2022



This year has been busy for Friends. We have responded to the needs of City residents for housing, clothes, education and vocational training, transportation and medical bills. Your donations ensure that Alexandrians participating in behavioral health services have a path to greater independence and live not just to survive but to thrive!

- » Friends paid for **Amy's** GED class. Amy is a mental health outpatient client whose income was less than \$900 a month. With these funds, Amy will be able to further her education which will lead to more job opportunities.
- » **Brenda** was approved for residential substance use disorder treatment, but there was a co-pay to be admitted. Friends paid \$2,600.00 to make sure she could receive the treatment she needed and keep her bed in the program.
- » **Dalia**, a teenager, needed plus size clothing, which is not often available through donations. Friends worked with her social worker to get her clothing that fits and feels comfortable, both key to teenage mental health.
- » Friends helped a **family** buy back-to-school clothes. Due to health issues, one parent could not work and the other was limited in work hours and caring for her family. Having nice clothes that fit contributed to these children feeling confident as they started the new school year. A Friends Board member accompanied them to the store to ensure they were able to purchase everything they needed.
- » In the middle of winter, a **mother and her teenage son** faced eviction. Friends helped pay their back rent, so the family was able to maintain housing.
- » **John** needed tutoring for community college classes. Friends paid for a tutor for the entire school year. This afforded John the opportunity to enrich his life and maximize opportunities for independence in the community.

Friends had the privilege to fund the 2022 Annual Apartment Manager Seminar, hosted by the Alexandria Office on Housing. *Strategies and Resources for Supporting Tenants with Behavioral Health Conditions and People Experiencing Acute Stress and Anxiety* included such topics as Mental Health, Stigma, Recovery, Fair Housing Rights, Racial Equity and Social Justice, Signs/Symptoms of Behavioral Health Disorders, De-escalation, and Local Resources for Tenants and Landlords. Friends contracted with the housing, law and mental health professionals at Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC) who put on an engaging and thought-provoking presentation. Educating the apartment managers about these issues will benefit the entire Alexandria community because it serves to destigmatize and humanize individuals struggling to manage their behavior and supports housing managers and landlords who experience the stress of maintaining housing.

In Fiscal Year 2022 (July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022), Friends spent \$44,000 supporting Alexandria adults and children with Serious Mental Illness, Intellectual Disabilities and Substance Use Disorders who receive services through DCHS. Friends has already spent \$27,000 in the first three months of Fiscal Year 2023, and we expect the need for services in our community to increase with the rise in cost of living and the fading of federal pandemic support.

Thank You!

For those who give to Friends, **thank you** from the bottom of our hearts! If you are just hearing about Friends, we hope you will include us in your charitable planning.



sure that your donations go directly to the needs of or training for community members. With the upcoming pts, we will need several new volunteers. We are currently in h basic website design and grant writing. Anna Dvorchik and o contact us at advorchik@gmail.com or mraylcsw@gmail.com.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Mental Health
Insurance Information
Enroll Virginia
703.364.9456

Intake for
Adult Mental Health,
Developmental Disability,
and Substance Use
Treatment Services

703.746.3535

24/7 Emergency
Mental Health Services

703.746.3401

DONATE TO FRIENDS

Donors may send a check of any amount to:

Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center
2525 Mount Vernon Ave.
Alexandria, VA 22301

ONLINE DONATIONS

mightycause.com/organization/Friends-Of-The-Alexandria-Mental-Health-Center
or
givegab.com/nonprofits/friends-of-the-alexandria-mental-health-center/campaigns/FriendsoftheAMHC

SHARE FRIENDS!

Before you recycle this newsletter, please help us enlarge our circle of Friends. Pass it on to a friend, neighbor or family member who may wish to support Friends' mission.

HELP US BE GREEN!

Send us your email address at FRIENDSOFAMHC@GMAIL.COM





Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center

2525 Mount Vernon Ave.

Alexandria, VA 22301



GIVING TUESDAY

Give online for Giving Tuesday at mightycause.com/organization/Friends-Of-The-Alexandria-Mental-Health-Center or givegab.com/nonprofits/friends-of-the-alexandria-mental-health-center/campaigns/FriendsoftheAMHC.

Donors may also choose Friends of the AMHC through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC)



Spotlight on Employment for Alexandrians with Serious Mental Illnesses

Friends and family of individuals who have a Serious Mental Illness (a category of diagnoses) often ask how their family members will gain or regain the ability to work. Work is key to independence and contributes to a sense of community belonging. When a family member has a chronic mental illness or has an acute onset, they need resources and opportunities to find work. In Alexandria, there are options for individuals returning to or training to join the workforce.

The Workforce Development Center (WDC) serves all Alexandrians, offering online vocational training, 1:1 job coaching, virtual career fairs and multiple programs for supporting Alexandrians seeking employment. For individuals who have serious mental illnesses or other disabilities, the WDC participates in the Ticket to Work Program in conjunction with the Social Security Administration (SSA). To find out more, please contact the WDC at 703.746.5990 and check out choosework.ssa.gov/success-stories/, to see examples of individuals who received assistance through this program.

The West End Wellness Center (WEWC) assists individuals with a Serious Mental Illness in achieving personal, social and vocational competency, while promoting mental health recovery and physical wellness. WEWC enhances opportunities for community integration through skills training, peer support, education,

recreation and vocational readiness. Members who participate in the Wellness Center strengthen their natural support networks and transition into the broader community.

The Supported Employment and Education Program (SEEP) supports eligible clients of Alexandria CSB programs, including the West End Wellness Center, who wish to pursue employment. SEEP promotes occupational readiness through community-based job development, job try-outs, situational assessments, customized job placement training and job coaching. Individuals are supported with finding satisfying and meaningful work that complements their personal strengths, goals and preferences. They learn how to utilize resources and develop job hunting skills while feeling confident in their ability to obtain and maintain employment in the community.

For those wishing to pursue education, the unit supports individuals with enrollment, exploring funding sources, study and organization skills, and advocacy for accommodations. For more information, call 703.746.3438.

We hope that you can use this information to help yourself or someone you know find supportive, meaningful work in our community.